“All That We Can Be”
A Dream Realized

The current expansion and upcoming related campaign is the third component of a three-part strategic plan developed 11 years ago by Headmaster O’Halloran and the Saint David’s Board of Trustees. This project addresses the space needs of the school so that Saint David’s and her boys can achieve their potential throughout the school’s four pillars: academics, arts, athletics, and spirituality.

In November 2017, the Saint David’s expansion and consolidation project hit a milestone—the topping off of construction work on Graham House. The milestone was celebrated with a ceremony for the campaign’s leadership donors, those who have supported the project in the quiet pre-public phase of its capital campaign. As of February 1, nearly $32 million has been raised.

The “All That We Can Be” Campaign will raise $40 million through fundraising, and $35 million through financing to complete the $75 million consolidation and expansion project; the largest in the school’s history. The project is on track for the new facilities to open in September 2018.

At this momentous time in the history of our school, Saint David’s Magazine interviewed Headmaster David O’Halloran and Board President Daniel S. Connolly ’77.

Headmaster David O’Halloran

Q: What is the background to the school’s expansion project?

It all began with a planning cycle in 2006, when the school engaged an outside strategic consultant to help us organize our strategic thinking. Out of this process we identified three goals: the first was to attract and retain exceptional faculty. This, we believe, is the most important asset of a school—its intellectual, human capital; the second goal was to ensure we remain representative of a broad cross-section of New York City. We wanted to be much more representative of the socio and economic diversity of this great city, while maintaining true to our mission, educational philosophy, and classical underpinning; the third strategic goal was to evaluate whether the physical assets of the school were mission-focused and driven.

We decided to tackle these goals in that order. Schools are defined principally by the relationships between the teachers and the boys first and foremost, then among the boys, and then among the parents, teachers and boys. Great schools have exceptional teachers and boys who are driven by the mission, as well as families that embrace and support that mission.

Our first campaign, which addressed the first two goals, supported a faculty initiative focused on professional development, supervision, evaluation, and compensation. At the same time, the school embarked upon an extensive curriculum initiative that addressed the depth and breadth of our curriculum and included vertical and horizontal integration school-wide. This effort resulted in identifying where we could link and partner with scientific, historic, and cultural institutions in recognition that a school is not defined by its walls, but also by interactions with experts in the field, which inspire faculty and provide boys with valuable experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. The first campaign also raised funds in support of our socioeconomic initiative.

At the same time that these initiatives were public, behind the scenes we were working on the third.

Q: What drove the decision to consolidate and expand into Graham House?

This project really is the fulfillment of a 45-year dream. Our wise predecessors knew that Graham House could give our boys...
Architectural rendering of Saint David’s new façade.

Architectural rendering of the new Upper Gymnasium.
what the Delano and Aldrich townhouses could not—large space and volume. Throughout the school’s history, space has dictated program and schedule. We realized we couldn’t be all that we can be without maximizing the physical assets of the school. We looked at other properties in the vicinity of the campus, and also at our contiguous space, and determined that we could meet the needs of program with space that the school already owned. We could create larger assembly and lunch space, enlarge homerooms and create common spaces, reorganize the homerooms so that they could be grouped together by grade, and enable boys to move more efficiently and effectively through the building.

We realized we could reimagine the 89th Street Campus from scratch and it would be the first time in the school’s history that program would be the driver of allocation and use of space, rather than space dictating program and schedule.

**Q: How were the expansion and the upcoming campaign determined to be essential and feasible at this time?**

Over 10 years, we systematically developed a plan that included helping to relocate all the tenants in Graham House. We also grew the endowment from $13 million to nearly $75 million.

We had to have a curriculum second to none, focused on balance across our four pillars before moving on the expansion and consolidation project. We knew we could embark on this project after the success of the curriculum and faculty initiatives. Our exceptional faculty were implementing incredible interdisciplinary programs and we were bursting at the seams. We formed committees to look into the legal aspects: real estate, financing, the architectural side, and we worked with the BSA and Landmarks, the Community Board, and Department of Buildings; all of this took many years. We have been mindful of being a good neighbor from the beginning of this process, and have implemented a system
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for regular communication with our neighbors through e-blast updates and outreach by the administrative team.

We also had to plan the logistical impact to its smallest unit, in order to maintain and sustain the integrity of our program, enabling us to keep the school open throughout the duration of the project.

Q: How will the expansion be financed?

We will have raised $40 million through our capital campaign – $35 million in the quiet phase and $5 million in the public phase. We also made sure to be debt-free before embarking on the campaign, so that we could comfortably finance $35 million. Half of that debt will be serviced through non-tuition revenue, including leases of the 94th Street Campus and Baby Cottons.

As we enter the public phase of the campaign, seeking to raise the last $5 million, I would ask that all in our community to the extent that they are able, make Saint David’s a philanthropic priority this year.

Q: What has the early participation been like from leaders in the school community during the Quiet Phase of the Campaign?

The participation and support has been tremendous. As part of our first campaign, we reached out to a broad cross-section of families about the strategic thinking, and solicited their thoughts on all aspects of the school’s operation. The feedback indicated a tremendous interest in our third strategic goal, but we thought it more important to first address the other two goals.

When we first pitched the concept of our third strategic goal, we received $10 million from initial outreach to a few families. None of these families’ boys would benefit from the finished facility, as they would have graduated; and yet, these remarkable people were excited to support us.

We formed a formal campaign committee, led by Jenny Price and Greg Hoogkamp, and any family who expressed an interest was invited to participate. Rather than ask for specific funds, we requested that families make Saint David’s their philanthropic priority. Trustees Craig Wood’s and John Menz’s expertise on the complexity of expansion logistics has been invaluable; as has been the participation of Alex Carey ’82, Frankie Campione, and Kevin Hayden. Jeanine and Louis Salvatore, Ursula and Kevin Corgan, and Kimberly and Sean Klimczak have been incredible as the annual vice-chairs on the campaign.

The Board has been extremely high functioning and committed to the school and all of her pillars. My first Board Chair, Gene Williams, was deeply committed to helping develop the strategic plan; Marc Robert ’74, our first alumnus Board Chair, brought Goals One and Two to a close, and began on the third. Current Chair Dan Connolly ’77 has been instrumental in helping us close it out.
In October, the final shipment of steel and mechanical equipment was moved onto the roof of Graham House.
Our school’s administrative team, curriculum chairs, and faculty and staff, while under pressure during the “great compression,” have exhibited the utmost professionalism—not skipping a beat these past two years, as they look forward to expanding the program into the new space.

Q: How will the new facilities allow all aspects of the school’s program to flourish?

In myriad ways! We’ve worked with curriculum chairs on what we wanted in our program and how we could design the spaces to meet those needs, and the space has been tailored for each curricular area. An entire floor is dedicated to science, technology, engineering, art and math learning. Art rooms and STE(A)M labs will be connected by a Commons area, and we will have a cutting-edge Innovation Lab equipped with 3D printers and other equipment where boys will engage in fabrication, coding, and mechanical engineering.

Three on-site gyms, Lower, Middle, and Upper, will provide relief to the boys’ schedules by eliminating the transportation time to and from 94th Street. The large gym with bleachers will enhance community by making it easier for faculty, classmates, and families to attend games.

Larger spaces throughout the school will allow for greater collaboration. Graham House will feature the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grade homerooms connected by Commons space. Fourth and Fifth Grades will also have common areas. The Lower School will all be grouped together contiguously by grades. Homerooms will be large, airy, and full of natural light.

Located at the core of the building and equidistant from all the homerooms, will be the specials (two libraries with shared common space, music, art, sports, STE(A)M labs, lunchrooms, and performing arts center). This will make it dramatically easier to move boys to and from their special classes. The entire flow throughout the school will be seamless; for the first time, horizontal movement on floors will be a reality!

Other spaces include a new dedicated lunchroom, foreign language labs, reading rooms, and a learning center for special services that will serve boys who struggle as well as those who want to extend their learning. The Hume Library will serve as the Eighth Grade Humanities classroom and house the Maiocco Collection of art books.

Our faculty will have a dedicated Faculty Study, which will house collections related to educational pedagogy and research on best practices.

And, the backyard will be opened up with increased surface area because we will no longer need the fire escapes.

Q: How will Saint David’s be the same and how will the school differ come September 2018?

I think of Saint David’s as our boys’ second home; it is warm and it will remain that way. While the school will occupy a large footprint, there will still be nooks and crannies; it will not feel institutional. One of the reasons we selected Sam White ’60 as the architect is because he is an alumnus who understands our culture and history; we knew he could marry well the neo-federal style of the Delano and Aldrich townhomes with the late 1800s eclectic style of Graham House—and repurpose all for twenty-first century learning.

The difference will be in the space enhancement; you will walk past a small office tucked into the circular stairwell, open a door and enter huge, open, airy spaces that best serve the needs of our boys and the school’s program.

Q: What is the project’s impact on the Alumni and Alumni Parent Community?

This project firmly underscores Saint David’s commitment to 89th Street and Madison. Saint David’s is the same school alumni love, redefined for the twenty-first century. Alumni families are very much a part of this project. We all stand on the shoulders of our predecessors; I stand on the shoulders of Headmasters David Hume and Don Maiocco.

Our alumni community can take pride in the fact that the mission of Saint David’s lives and can be fulfilled through a school with the resources, space, and program to be all that it can be for a new century.

Q: What do you find to be the most exciting aspect of the expansion?

We are using everything that we own to serve our mission; to enable the boys, teachers, and program to be all that they can be as far into the future as we can see.

For more on the All That We Can Be project, visit our campaign website at: www.saintdavids.org/2018expansion

Headmaster David O’Halloran and Board President Daniel S. Connolly ’77.